III. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for managing a plurality of console devices over a network, comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of console devices interconnected over a hardwired network;

checking an availability of one of the console devices;

requesting a shared session from a current user of the checked console device;

starting the shared session; and

accessing the console device on a peer to peer basis over the hardwired network during the shared session,

wherein both the hardware and software layer of the console device can be accessed without the requirement for an additional hardware dongle or a signal device transmitter,

and wherein the method is adapted to access the console device in the case that the console device has failed.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the hardwired network is a hardwired serial port network.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the shared session is started from a remote location.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the shared session is started at a TCP/IP layer level.

5. (Original) The method of claim, further comprising the step of performing system console access of the accessed consoled device.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the console devices are computer systems.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for managing a plurality of console devices in a network, comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of console devices interconnected over a hardwired serial port network;

checking an availability of one of the console devices prior to attempting to access the console device;

requesting a shared session from a current user of the console device;

starting a shared session at a TCP/IP layer level;

accessing the console device on a peer to peer basis over the hardwired serial port network; and

performing system console access of the console device,

wherein both the hardware and software layer of the console device can be accessed without the requirement for an additional hardware dongle or a signal device transmitter,

and wherein the method is adapted to access the console device in the case that the console device has failed.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the console devices are computer systems.

9. (Currently Amended) A method for managing a plurality of console devices in a network, comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of console devices interconnected over a hardwired serial port network;

a current user of one of the console devices inviting a new user to join a shared session of the console device;

starting the shared session of the console device; and

accessing the console device on a peer to peer basis over the hardwired serial port network,

wherein both the hardware and software layer of the console device can be accessed without the requirement for an additional hardware dongle or a signal device transmitter,

and wherein the method is adapted to access the console device in the case that the console device has failed.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the shared session is started at a TCP/IP layer level.

11. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of performing system console access of the console device.

12. (Currently Amended) A system for managing a console device in a network, comprising:

a system server;

a terminal concentrator server connected to the system server;

a multiplexor connected to the terminal concentrator server;

a console device connected to the multiplexor; and

a program product stored on the system server for allowing users to open a shared session and access the console device,

wherein both the hardware and software layer of the console device can be accessed without the requirement for an additional hardware dongle or a signal device transmitter,

and wherein the system is adapted to access the console device in the case that the console device has failed.

13. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the terminal concentrator server, the multiplexor and the device are interconnected over a hardwired serial port network.

14. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the terminal concentrator server and the system server are interconnected over a hardwired serial port network.

15. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the terminal concentrator server and the system server are addressably connected over a network

16. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the console device is a computer system.

17. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the shared session is opened by the users at a TCP/IP layer level.

18. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the console device is accessed by the users on a peer to peer basis.

19. (Original) The system of claim 12, wherein the program product, when executed, comprises:

program code configured to access one of a plurality of console devices on a peer to peer basis over a hardwired serial port network;

program code configured to invite a user to join a shared session of one of a plurality of console devices interconnected over a hardwired serial port network;

program code configured to request a shared session from a current user of one of a plurality of console devices interconnected over a hardwired serial port network;

program code configured to delegate control of a console device during a shared session; and

program code configured to regain delegated control of a console device.

20. (Currently Amended) A system for managing a plurality of console devices in a network, comprising:

a system server;

a plurality of terminal concentrator servers connected to the system server;

a separate multiplexor connected to each of the terminal concentrator servers;

at least one console device hardwired to each multiplexor; and

a program product stored on the system server for allowing users to open a shared session of a particular console device, and to access the particular console device on a peer to peer basis,

wherein both the hardware and software layer of the console device can be accessed without the requirement for an additional hardware dongle or a signal device transmitter,

and wherein the system is adapted to access the console device in the case that the console device has failed.

21. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the shared sessions are opened on a TCP/IP layer level.

22. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the console devices are computer systems.

23. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the system server, the terminal concentrator servers, the multiplexors, and the console devices are interconnected over the hardwired serial port network.

24. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the system server and the terminal concentrator servers are addressably connected.

25. (Original) The system of claim 20, wherein the program product, when executed, comprises:

program code configured to access one of a plurality of console devices on a peer to peer

basis over a hardwired serial port network;

program code configured to invite users to join a shared session of one of a plurality of console devices interconnected over a hardwired serial port network;

program code configured to request a shared session from a current user of one of a plurality of console devices interconnected over a hardwired serial port network;

program code configured to delegate control of a console device during a shared session; and

program code configured to regain delegated control of a console device.

26. (Currently Amended) A program product stored on a recordable medium for managing a plurality of console devices interconnected over a hardwired serial port network, which when executed, comprises:

program code configured to access one of a plurality of console devices on a peer to peer basis;

program code configured to invite a user to join a shared session of one of the console devices;

program code configured to request a shared session from a current user of one of the console devices;

program code configured to delegate control of one of the console devices during a shared session; and

program code configured to regain delegated control of one of the console devices,

wherein both the hardware and software layer of the console device can be accessed

without the requirement for an additional hardware dongle or a signal device transmitter,

and wherein the program product is adapted to access the console device in the case that the console device has failed.